

"dover beach" by heart, having memorized it during a very boring class in college and having thrilled to it, in silent melodrama, during other equally boring sessions.

hecht and holland spoiled that for me somewhat.

still, "dover beach" will live on, and, if hecht and holland do also, they will owe a considerable debt to matthew arnold.

i sort of hope that i will not be known to posterity for this here "tremulous cadence" alone, but, in the eternity department,

i'll settle for what i can get.

TUESDAY'S HERO

"my god," she says, "you did the dishes."

"i didn't do them very well," i say.

"of course you didn't. you never do. but still, you actually did them ... and just when i had an awful day at work! whatever got into you?"

i say, "i just thought i'd surprise you."

i don't mention that i'd run out of envelopes in the midst of mailing manuscripts,

and that i figured i'd perform my grand gesture before the dishes had a chance to really pile up.

WATCHING THEM UNWIND THE DOUBLE HELIX

charles and i are discussing how feminist extremists seem to want to remove all forms of power, strength, authority, wealth, virility, fertility, athleticism, experience, creativity, prowess, accomplishment, prestige, brains, wisdom, and,

of course, paternity,

from the list of qualities a woman should be allowed to find attractive in a man,

and i realize,
what do i care: i'll always have
my good looks to fall back on.

PAUL CÉZANNE: THE CARD PLAYERS

is this painting primarily concerned
with pipes or with noses?

four pipes hang on a wall.
one pipe has been set aside
on the card table.
a bored man in the background
is smoking a pipe.

all the noses are pointed,
even that of the kibitzing juvenile.

probably the french can place a nose
within a square mile of its birthplace.

i suspect these noses must have
enormous significance for the french.

but what if these pipes
are in point of fact
actually lug-wrenches?

could cézanne have invented the lug-wrench
before henry ford invented the wheel?

there remains the even greater conundrum:
would a bored man standing
against the wall, arms folded,
in the background of a card game,

pass the time

by smoking a lug-wrench?

clearly the quintessence of the theory/practice
of paul cézanne

consists of his precedent-shattering
defamiliarization
of noses and pipes/lug-wrenches.